

MAY 2024



ZERO BEAT

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



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"NAISS this is AFØS"

On Monday, April 22, PPRAA members Dara/KF0NIX and David/AD0QD each pressed a PTT button for a few seconds each, and achieved a rare accomplishment that very few hams can claim: they talked to an astronaut in space over ham radio.

The event was the result of months of research, planning, coordination, and systems engineering to enable students from the Thrive Home School Academy, where Dara is a science teacher, to communicate with the International Space Station. Dara has been coordinating between her school, a neighboring elementary school (Stratton Meadows), ARISS, ARRL, and NASA, fulfilling training and curriculum development requirements, and adding a heavy project-management workload to her already busy teaching job.



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ISS Continued

David has been managing the technical side, ensuring all hardware is present and working. Together, they pulled off a successful event at which Thrive students talked to astronaut Jeanette Epps for about nine minutes, the length of time for which the ISS is visible as it arcs from one horizon to another. A lineup of students asked one question each, and Epps kindly volunteered her time to answer these questions in an engaging and sometimes funny way as she soared in orbit overhead.

Dara and David assembled teams from the schools and from PPRAA to support the event. One might not think of the hundreds of tiny details that might be necessary to make an event like this happen, but here are a few examples:

- Roger/W3MIX, Rick/KE0GVU, and Tom/W0TBT hauled sandbags by rope to the top of the school gymnasium to ballast the antenna mount on the roof.
- David and Roger performed troubleshooting on the antenna tracking system that was lent by ARRL, as some of the hardware they sent suffered a catastrophic failure. Ken/K0KWH reached out to state's ARRL section manager to solicit additional hardware to support this troubleshooting.
- Kathy/AE0UX and David managed to fit ARRL's radio, tracking systems, and dozens of beam antenna elements into a packing case that was not exactly sized for convenient packing, after the event was over.



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ISS Continued

- Doug/N7LEM and LD/W0XLD provided backup Zoom meeting, laptop, camera, and audio feed equipment in case the school's livestream plans did not materialize.
- LD loaned audio interface equipment and cabling to the school's AV team when their livestream setup did not have the proper equipment.
- The whole team pitched in to un-tangle the coaxial and control cables, both during setup and teardown, without a single kink.

PPRAA would like to thank the many volunteers who worked on this ISS contact project. It was covered by local news stations Fox21, KRDO, and KOAA, and even made ARRL's weekly newsletter, emailed to all members nationwide, on April 25. News coverage videos and livestream video are available; please email W0XLD@W0XLD.com for links.

FREE VE Test Sessions
Saturday, 11 May 2024

Saturday, 8 June 2024 at 10 am

Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management
3755 Mark Dabling Blvd. Colorado Springs, CO 80907
ve@ppraa.org

Multi-Operator POTA Activation

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"Stand by for next operator."

Ordinarily, when we think of phrases we repeat over and over on the air, we think of a CQ call, an invitation to any station for a contact. But at the Parks On The Air "Support Your Parks" weekend

event at Cheyenne Mountain State Park on April 20, as many as seven PPRAA operators took turns talking to each chaser station, each in turn giving their exchange and following up with, "stand by for next operator" in a massive multi-op round-robin.

The multi-op station was a brainstorm of Ben/AB2SG and Dave/N0DMP. They have been experimenting with Ethernet cabling and RJ-45 jack splitters that allow multiple microphones to be connected to a Yaesu radio, which uses an RJ-45 jack for its mic connector. During the multi-op state park activation, each operator could have their own microphone, plug into daisy-chained splitters, and simply take turns giving their exchanges to the chasers. It made for a lot of cabling on the round table in the community room at Cheyenne Mountain State Park, but it was extremely easy for each participant to log each chaser, and for each chaser to log a large number of activators in quick succession.

Such a multi-operator configuration made a welcoming opportunity for many club members to use a single radio, with its known-good antenna system, and to try their hands at an activation if they might not otherwise have had the chance to set up equipment and get on the air. Cheyenne Mountain State Park staff graciously allowed the club to use the community room in a camper services building, and as cold, snowy



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weather enveloped the mountain, the adjacent playground, unused by children, made a great place to set up a mast and antenna for the activation. We also had a guest, Dave/W8XAL, bring CW paddles and activate the park simply by plugging into Ken/K0KWH's radio. He worked the east coast on 15 meters and made a successful DX contact with a chaser in France.

PPRAA members enjoyed the camaraderie at the multi-op station round table, as well as socializing in between activation contacts, and while learning from Dave's CW demonstration. We hope the Cheyenne Mountain State Park staff felt "supported" during Support Your Parks weekend, as we showed appreciation for the facilities the park provides.



**The proposed revision to PPRAA bylaws
is available on the PPRAA website**

https://ppraa.org/downloads/PPRAA_Bylaws_Rev10_final.pdf

**Please review this document in preparation for the vote
for approval by the membership at the June monthly meeting.**

Thank you!

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PIKES PEAK RADIO
AMATEUR ASSN.

MEGAFEST 2024

Lewis-Palmer High School
1300 Higby Rd, Monument, CO 80132

 DATE 27 JULY 2024  TIME 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

 <https://ppraa.org/megafest>



Save the Date

Pueblo ARC and PPRAA will activate USS Pueblo Memorial for Museum Ships Weekend

We will be operating from the USS Pueblo Memorial at the Pueblo Convention Center. We will be in the Bernstein Room and in the parking lot. The plan is to have at least three stations on the air and are looking for station operators / loggers. We will be operating from 1800MDT Friday 31 May until 1759MDT Sunday 2 June (0000Z 01 Jun 2024 – 2359Z 02 Jun 2024).

Visit [PPRAA.org](https://ppraa.org) or email USSPueblo@PPRAA.org for more information

- Friday May 31, 1800hrs to Sunday June 2, 2024, 1800hrs
- On Air
- More info about Museum Ships Weekend
<https://www.nj2bb.org/museum/>

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General Membership meeting (12 June) will be both in-person and virtual

Location: Golden Corral, 1970 Waynoka Rd, Colorado Springs

The business meeting starts at 7 PM, but get your dinner and beverage of choice and check in any time after 6 PM for a social hour. Club members check your email for info or email Officers@PPRAA.org to receive the Zoom information.

Field Day

- Saturday, 22 June 2024 1200 to Sunday, 23 June 2024 1200
- Mountain View Electric Association, 11140 E Woodmen Rd, Falcon CO 80831

PPRAA Picnic and Car Show

- Saturday, August 17, 2024.
- Fountain Creek Regional Park – Pavilion #3
- 1000–1600, food served at 1230.
- Club will provide burgers, brats, chips, drinks.
- Bring a side dish or dessert to share.
- Come early to operate portable from the park.
- Bring your vehicle and show off your mobile installation.
- Win Prizes!

Contact Zero Beat

Do you have photos of PPRAA events you'd like to share, or news from the ham radio world that the club might like to hear? Please email zerobeat@ppraa.org to share your ideas and pictures.